
Mayor Michael Bloomberg and Former Interior Secretary Ken Salazar to be Honored at Green Carpet Gala in New York City

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The nation's leading national park advocacy organization, the nonprofit National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA), will tonight host its Green Carpet Gala at Central Park's Rumsey Playfield, to celebrate and build support for America's national parks. NPCA will honor Mayor Michael Bloomberg and former Department of the Interior Secretary Ken Salazar with the William Penn Mott, Jr. Park Leadership Award for their commitment and ongoing support for national parks nationwide. Famed musician Don McLean will perform before more than 400 guests.

"As we approach the centennial of the National Park Service in 2016, this evening celebrates our national parks and supporters for their commitment to protecting America's national heritage for future generations," said Theresa Pierno, Acting President for the National Parks Conservation Association.

New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg has worked to better connect urban communities to green spaces and specifically to improve Jamaica Bay at Gateway National Recreation by collaborating with former Interior Secretary Salazar with a Cooperative Management Agreement. The agreement would allow the City and the National Park Service to combine their land assets around Jamaica Bay and co-manage the park together. In addition, Mayor Bloomberg announced ambitious plans for Jamaica Bay in the City's \$20 billion storm protection plan, including the creation of a new conservancy to support the park. The newly formed Jamaica Bay-Rockaway Park Conservancy will be led by NPCA's board chair, Tom Secunda, to transform Gateway into one of America's most iconic urban national parks.

"We are pleased to honor two individuals for their outstanding leadership in working to create a network of world-class urban parks across the country to better connect cities and diverse communities with their natural surroundings, leaving a lasting legacy for the next generation of national park stewards," said Pierno.

Throughout his tenure as Interior Secretary, Ken Salazar has demonstrated his commitment to

protecting and preserving our national parks and making them more accessible and relevant to all Americans. As head of the Department of the Interior, Secretary Salazar successfully banned uranium mining on land near the Grand Canyon, reached unprecedented progress with Everglades restoration projects, and created the West Coast's first marine wilderness area at Drakes Estero in Point Reyes National Seashore. His support of the Antiquities Act included the designation of national monuments at Fort Monroe in Virginia and Cesar Chavez in California, further diversifying the National Park System.

Despite the federal government shutdown and closure of national parks, this year's Green Carpet Gala will gather hundreds of dignitaries, including elected officials, business leaders, the National Park Service, and regional national park supporters. Award-winning actress and singer Bette Midler will present the award to Mayor Bloomberg; former assistant secretary of Fish, Wildlife and Parks Tom Strickland will present to the Honorable Ken Salazar. Co-Chairs for the event include Marjorie and William Berkley, Diana Blank, Janice and Robert F. Callahan, Roberta and Steve Denning, Caron and Alan Lacy, Trina and Mike Overlock, Larry Rockefeller, Cindy and Tom Secunda, Diana Wege Sherogan and Tim Sherogan, Tracy and Gene Sykes, Melissa Vail and Norman Selby, Merryl Snow Zegar and Chuck Zegar.